

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 40 No. 3

March 15, 1971

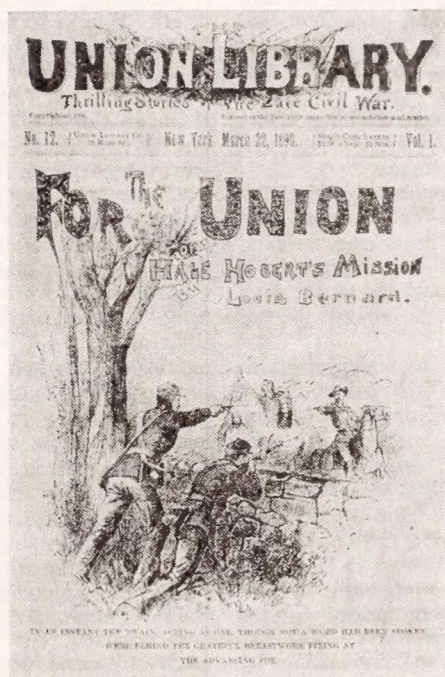
Whole No. 462

## The Anatomy of Dime Novels

### No. 21 Stories of Polar Exploration

By J. Edward Leithead

Conclusion



### DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 135

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Publisher: Union Library Co., 18 Rose St., New York, N. Y. Issues: 13 (highest number seen advertised). Dates: January 4, 1890 to March 29, 1890. Size: 9x6". Pages: 32. Price: 5c. Schedule of Issue: Weekly. Illustration: Black and white pictorial cover. Contents: Stories of the Civil War.

## The Anatomy of Dime Novels

### No. 21 Stories of Polar Exploration

By J. Edward Leithead

#### Conclusion

"Grening, puffing on his pipe, nodded. 'Rex knows the country and the people. He will know what to say better than a complete stranger, and some of this particular band are not to be trusted too far. Let Rex and the two boys go.'

"It was therefore agreed that Rex, Harry and Dick should make the trip across the ice fields to the Eskimo village, some thirty miles distant. Expertly Rex harnessed ten huskies to his sledge, and sat in front, while Harry and Dick took their places back of him. The sledge, mounted on runners, was long, broad and low, and almost impossible to upset, provided with bearskin robes, so that the trio were as comfortable—well, nearly—as they would have been dashing along Broadway or Fifth Avenue in the most elegant cutter ever made.

"Rex cracked his long whip and away sped the fleet-footed malemutes, curly tails bobbing in unison, yelping and barking in wolf-dog high spirits. The wind whistled past the boys' ears, but, for that northern latitude it was indeed mild.

"The harness of a malemute was not an extensive affair, being simply a sort of girth placed around the body, to the top of which one long rein was attached, each dog being separated from all the rest. They were not yoked or harnessed together, each being secured from running away by one rein, these being fastened to the front of the sledge and not held by the driver. The team was guided by the whip, the driver cracking up his lead-er now and then, and indicating by

the side on which he cut the lead-dog whether it was to the right or left that he wished to go.

"Rex showed great dexterity as a dog-puncher, and his two companions were much interested in watching his maneuvers, now shouting to a dog that seemed bent on cutting away altogether, now exploding the whiplash over the ear of another, not pulling his weight with the others and making him expedite his movements, or calling briskly to the whole team and cheering them to renewed exertions.

"Once the dogs caught sight of an Arctic fox, and for a moment they seemed inclined to give chase. The steady cracking of the tough lash and a bestowal of forceful epithets kept them on the right icy track, although one or two of the fiercest looked back wistfully at their natural enemy.

"Later on they got to fighting among themselves, one wolfish creature having suddenly crowded the dog in front and taken a nip of a hind leg. In an instant all were snarling and snapping, and it would have taken but little time to get harness and dogs inextricably tangled, had not Rex acted promptly and energetically.

"Standing up in the sledge—not an easy thing to do, as it was jolting and pitching about in an alarming way—Rex worked the whiplash and at every blow some dog retired whimpering from the fray, one slash each except for the battle-scarred, sharp-fanged leader, a splendid, tireless dog in rough going, but a savage fighter once aroused. The vigorous corrective got results and drew high praise from

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DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP—Vol. 40, No. 3, Whole No. 462—March 15, 1971  
Published monthly at 821 Vermont St., Lawrence, Kansas 66044. Edited by Edward T. LeBlanc, 87 School St., Fall River, Mass. 02720. Second class postage paid at Lawrence, Kansas. Assistant Editor, Ralph F. Cummings, 161 Pleasant St., South Grafton, Mass. 01560. Subscription: \$3.00 per year. Ad Rates—9c per word, \$1.50 per column inch; \$3.25 per quarter page, \$4.50 per half page and \$7.50 per page. Ads should be submitted by the 15th of the month in order to assure publication in the following month's issue.



Rex's companions.

"Great Scott, Rex!" exclaimed Harry Stoner. "If you can control nearly a dozen half-wild dogs with nothing but a single line to each of them, what could you do with a good team of horses, properly harnessed and trained!"

"I don't know. I never drove a horse or even saw one even. I know all about sled-dogs, though, and there are few natives that can beat me at driving them. For that matter, I suppose I might call myself a native son, never having lived anywhere else."

"But you weren't born here?" said Dick, giving Harry a quick glance.

"How do you know? My father has lived here all my life and longer. How could I be born anywhere else?"

"It was not easy to keep up a conversation at the rate they were going and it was given up altogether . . . dashing over the ice and snow, now up, now down, now whisking along the edge of a crevasse, a deep fissure in a glacier with but room enough for their sledge to pass . . . now darting through a narrow defile where the gigantic ice masses reared lofty summits high above their heads, now scudding with ease over a glittering plain, and then the dogs slowing to pick their way among hummocks and mounds of rough ice, but still keeping up a good average speed, and, under the direction of the young Northman, drawing steadily nearer to the Eskimo village.

"Harry Stoner was eager to question Rex further. He was almost convinced that the lad was his missing brother, providentially saved from the floating ice many years before, probably by the very man whom he now called father.

"The exciting ride across the ice fields and among the snow-clad peaks of this strange region had lasted some time when Rex, suddenly pointing ahead as they were rushing down a slope, said:

"There it is." He began slowing down the dogs, which were quite willing to do so.

"What?" asked Harry. "I don't see anything but a lot of low mounds huddled together. Call that a village?"

"Those are igloos, or the snow huts of these people. You fellows were never inside one, I suppose? The makeshift shelters we put up for the Dart's crew ain't like the Eskimos build them."

"The dog-team was swerving in toward the strange-looking huts as Rex continued:

"They're built of ice blocks, placed in a circle, each row being smaller than the one under it, until a single block forms the top, though usually a hole is left there for the smoke and bad air to escape."

"They look like old-fashioned beehives, snowed under," said Dick, with a laugh.

"I should think the people would freeze to death," added Harry.

"On the contrary, they are sometimes uncomfortably warm and have to go outside to cool off. They burn oil lamps, do all their cooking—what little there is—by the same means, and thus obtain light, heat and a cook-stove, all from their blubber or train-oil lamps."

"Rex brought the dogs to a standstill, the bushy-tailed creatures sitting or lying upon the snow as contentedly as though it were the softest and warmest of rugs. Rex then gave utterance to a shout and stepped out upon the ice. At first there was no response, then several round white objects were seen projecting from the openings in three or four igloos and turning from side to side.

"Harry Stoner and Dick Lisle saw that these objects were heads, covered with white fur hoods, and soon after they made this discovery the shoulders belonging to the heads also appeared, then the arms, bodies and legs of half a dozen squat, round-faced little fellows not much over five feet in height.

"Seven or eight men in all, and one or two women, advanced, the latter carrying their babies in fur pouches, the heads of the juveniles being alone visible. Rex was known to them and greeted, but his companions were stared at with some concern, not to say suspicion.

"These my friends," said Rex, in



the native dialect. 'You like me, you like my friends. I like you, my friends like you. Understand?'

"The little fellows nodded and grinned, and would have rubbed greasy noses against those of the visitors but that the latter held aloof.

"My friends come from great ship, fire-boat,' went on Rex. 'Have trouble, boat not go chug-chug any more, and they want to go south on the ice, dog-sleds. Can I get one of your band to guide them?'

"Ship caught in ice, break up, go down, men left in ice, want to go home?' asked one of the group, who seemed to be in authority, no doubt a chief.

"Yes,' said Rex. 'Will you come along?'

"How far?' asked the Eskimo.

"Rex put up his fingers and said a few words.

"Too far to take woman,' was the answer.

"But we don't want your wife. Can't you leave her behind?'

"No, too little to leave behind.'

"Maybe you know of someone else, some other villager?'

"The Eskimo said he did, but that it was a long way off and perhaps the party had better rest here for the present, until a guide could be summoned or the chief himself could make up his mind to go. As our friends were somewhat fatigued and hungry, and the dogs certainly needed food and rest, there was no objection to this proposition.

"The time flew swiftly by, there being so much to see and wonder at, but at last even Rex thought it was time to decide something, as there was no use remaining longer if they could not get a guide.

"Well, have you made up your mind?' he asked the Eskimo chief as the latter came up, after having a long talk with one of his friends, a newcomer since their arrival, Rex was sure, though Harry and Dick could see no difference between him and the rest.

"The village head man replied that he could not go, then pressed them to remain overnight, promising, in the

morning, either to guide them to the other village or send a runner who could perform any errand they might require.

"Thank you, we'll return to our camp,' Rex told him, and taking an arm each of his two friends, he hurried them toward the sledge, whispering excitedly:

"These people are planning treachery. While we have been here, a dozen or more newcomers have showed up from somewhere. They mean to rob and murder us—for one thing, they want this dog-team, one of the finest in the region. There are some bad ones among these fellows, and once in a while the Northwest Mounties come from Fort Yukon to pick up a killer.'

"I didn't notice there were any more of them than were here when we arrived,' Harry Stoner said.

"But I did,' replied Rex. 'I have been keeping my eyes open ever since the chief refused to guide us or furnish another man for the job.'

"At this moment they reached the sledge, where the dogs were standing in harness, and as they got aboard, Rex cracked his whip like a pistol shot. The boys had revolvers strapped on under their capotes, but tried running first. As the dogs plunged forward a great outcry rose on the wind. Looking back they beheld a score of Eskimos, brandishing three or four rifles, some harpoons and wicked-looking clubs, making after them.

"Just what I figured!' exclaimed Rex, and urged the dogs to do their utmost. They were running at top speed when Rex suddenly uttered a cry of alarm and called to his friends to hang on with all their strength. They were swiftly approaching an icy precipice, and it was now impossible to check the speed of the dog-team. The animals would coast right over the ice to the brink and down, no matter how they dug in with their nails, and to turn aside would be to run directly upon the enemy.

"On came the yelling horde, eager to plunder, and on dashed the huskies, excited by the cries they heard and supposed were meant for them. The three young men clung frantically to



the sledge, and minutes after the first warning the brink was reached. The dogs could not stop, snarling they leaped outward, dragging the sledge with them. It struck an ice mound going over and Dick Lisle was thrown out backwards. Rex went flying through the air headfirst and Harry rolled after him. And then—boys and dogs landed, two-thirds buried in a huge snowdrift, not more than twenty feet below the edge of the precipice. The Eskimos, catching up on the upper level, pounced on Dick before he could get to his feet.

"Not a dog was hurt, nor were the two boys who had taken the drop with the team at racing speed. As they dug out of the snow mass, boys and dogs alike, the Eskimos lined the icy lip of the bluff above, two keeping a tight grip on Dick at either side. Rex, looking upward, hastily drew off a mitten and slid a hand under his capote. It reappeared fisting a long-barreled six-shooter, which slanted upward at the fierce-eyed Innuits, as the Eskimos called themselves . . . The gun sounded off with a flat roar and sounded again, the squat, befurred figures darting back from the edge of the drop-off. The two holding Dick tried separately to drag him with them, but he resisted strongly and Rex yelled, 'Jump, Dick!'

"And Dick, wrenching free, took the leap, sinking deep in the snow as he struck, while Harry, yanking out his own gun, joined Rex in whanging away at the little men. Several of the latter fired back as they retreated, doing no harm, and quickly got out of sight and line of fire. Both boys could have dropped three or four in their tracks but refrained from killing because the little men seemed more inclined to run than fight.

"Dick had righted the sledge and untangled the harness, the huskies having no trouble kicking free of the powdery mass. All was ready for a fresh start as Rex and Harry reloaded their weapons and thrust them back in holsters. They lost no time piling onto the sledge and as Rex popped his whip, the dogs sprang forward. They made hard going of it until they clear-

ed the snowbound area and were again on the ice.

"The boys realized they were not going to make it back to the home base that night, and Rex began cutting wide circles to an abandoned log hut that was still more or less habitable. Harry took the opportunity to question Rex as they skimmed along, for the wind, although keen, was not sounding off at anything like top pitch, which could have precluded conversation.

" 'Did you ever hear your father say, Rex,' asked Harry Stoner, 'that you were not his own son?'

" 'Surprised, the other replied, 'What should he say that for when I am?'

" 'But you don't remember your mother?' continued Harry. 'Never saw her picture?'

" 'No, no.'

" 'Now let me tell you something, Rex. About seventeen years ago—just your age—my baby brother Charlie was carried away on a cake of ice from a vessel on which my father and mother were passengers. The body was never recovered, there were no proofs of the child's death, and he might easily have been found by explorers, whalers, Eskimos or by a solitary recluse like your father, and brought up in the belief that he was born here.' "Rex made no immediate reply. Surprise had grown to amazement as he listened to Stoner, and the possibilities confused Rex as well.

" 'One more question,' said Harry. 'What is your father's real name?'

" 'Royal Grening.'

" 'Then all is explained,' Harry cried triumphantly. 'That man, deceived, outraged and broken-hearted, went north on an exploring expedition which was never heard of. But somehow and providentially he was saved, and must have preferred a life of solitude to returning to the scene of his past sorrows. It was Heaven's own hand that directed the helpless child to him, thus saving you, Rex. Royal Grening was my mother's suitor, my father betrayed him, and mother, believing him to be false, married the rival, David Stoner. If your father says that he found you and the nurse-



maid who went overboard with you accidentally one night, our case is proven. I am satisfied that you are my brother and I know that my mother will say so when she sees you.'

"I don't know what to think," said Rex. 'I love the man who treated me like a son and I wouldn't want to leave him . . . but I long, too, to see those other beautiful lands in the south which my father has told me of many times . . .'

The story shifts "to the whaling bark 'Billow,' which, having nearly finished her season's cruise in the Arctic, was about to set sail for the southland. The 'Billow' was commanded by Captain David Stoner, a man who had formerly owned vessels of his own but had squandered a great deal of money and was now reduced to the position of captain of a whaler.

"It was high time the 'Billow' should set her course for a more temperate climate than that of the Arctic, for should winter set in before she got away, there was every chance of her, having to remain there several months, even if she were not crushed by the ice-pack.

"It was on the same day in late September that Rex Grening and his companions tried unsuccessfully to hire an Eskimo guide for Captain Van Ness that a whale was discovered from the masthead of the 'Billow,' coming out of the pack-ice and making its way toward the whaler. The boats were at once lowered and started in pursuit of the monster, which seemed as yet unconscious of its danger.

"The captain's boat was in advance and rushed head and head upon the whale, the harpooner balanced in readiness to let fly at the proper distance. The weapon sped true, sank deep in the huge creature's head, and with a mighty splashing and rolling it endeavored to turn about. The boat, manned by experts, was rowed quickly to the rear, to avoid the whale's terrible flukes, just narrowly escaping a blow that would have smashed it to kindling and killed the occupants.

"Then the creature headed back for the ice once more, hoping thus to escape its tormentors. Captain Stoner

took his place in the bow, leaving the harpooner to steer, and seizing a heavy brass gun for shooting explosive bombs, fired one into the whale's side. It did not prove fatal, but only irritated the aquatic mammal, causing it to lash the waves furiously and send up great columns of vapor from its spout holes.

"The line having been made fast, the boat was now being towed by the monster at a frightful rate, the spray dashing over the crew, the water boiling and surging around the craft, on the verge of capsizing. The whale was heading directly for the pack-ice, under which it no doubt intended to dive. Once the mammoth of the deep reached the ice, the whalers would not only lose it but the boat and very likely their own lives.

"Take in the slack!" yelled the captain, lance in hand, ready to strike the moment he was near enough. 'He must not get away.'

succeeded in taking in considerable of the slack but this was not enough, and Captain Stoner again seized his

"The men laid hold of the line and gun, loaded it up and fired a deadly missile at the retreating whale. It entered its body, exploded and caused a dangerous wound, as could be seen by the spouting blood, although it did not reduce the creature's speed.

"The captain's boat was rapidly nearing the solid masses of ice, detached floes even now were surrounding them on all sides, with the second boatload of men not far behind. The whale was slackening speed, and Captain Stoner sent another bomb into its side. Uttering a fierce roar, spouting gore and lashing the icy waters into foam, the now thoroughly maddened whale made a sudden turn and dashed at the boat, open-mouthed.

"Stern!" shouted the captain. 'Back water, all hands.'

"The crew tried to check the forward motion and send her astern, but there was little time and the sight of that huge cetacean coming at them may have reminded them of the fabled Jonah and struck terror to hearts usually strangers to fear.

"Captain Stoner wasn't paralyzed.



Seeing their danger, he sprang overboard, dove deep down below the surface and made sturdy strokes away from the scene of disaster. Raising its great head out of the water, the whale threw itself upon the cockle shell of a boat, seizing the gunwale in its massive jaws. It was shattered to fragments, men screaming as those jaws closed upon them. Not content with this, the furious creature attacked the second boat, and charged to and fro, beating the waves with terrific force, crushing boat and crew, the tubs, harpoons, oars and other implements being scattered broadcast upon the Arctic sea.

"Desperately wounded, this display of rage actually its dying flurry, the whale turned once more toward the ice and swam slowly away. It had been too severely dealt with, however, to recover; its pace slowed more and more, and some distance short of the ice-pack, it lashed the water feebly for awhile, then turned on its side.

"At the same moment a man crawled upon the ice, not far off, having emerged dripping from the chilling waters, and rising to his feet, shook himself vigorously. It was Captain Stoner, who, of all the whaler's crew, had alone escaped with his life. He saw the dead body of the whale, but looked in vain for the whaleboats or any of his men. Tough as he was he felt panicky. There stood the full-rigged 'Billow' in the middle distance, with no one but himself to handle her.

"'Confound the luck!' muttered David Stoner. 'I can't stay here, I shall freeze to death. . . . Almost in the very same latitude, too,' he added with an oath.

"He ran along the ice in a rising wind, intending to pass from floe to floe and board the 'Billow.' 'Here,' he said to himself, 'must be the very stream into which the ice-cake drifted that night so long ago. And Mary believes him to be yet alive! Impossible!'

"Presently he caught sight of a party of men hurrying along the far bank. They had evidently spotted him and were coming to his assistance. Two or three shouted and waved, and he shouted and waved in return. He was

growing benumbed with cold in his wet capote, as icicles formed rapidly. He stumbled on the rough ice as he neared the group of fur-clad white men, fell and became unconscious. They lifted him up and carried him to a rude but comfortable shelter made from the wreck of a vessel.

"The rescuers were Captain Van Ness and his crew, and they had been exploring the coast when they beheld the disaster to the whaleboats. The white-bearded Grening, who met them at the door of the shelter, saw something familiar in the weathered features of the unconscious man. He stepped aside to allow Captain Van Ness and another man to pass inside with their burden.

"'What is the name of that whaling vessel out yonder?' Grening asked. 'Hasn't been a boat of that kind in these sea lanes since I don't know when.'

"'The Billow,' replied Van Ness. 'This man is apparently the only one who survived the encounter with the whale.'

"A whale-oil lamp was lighted as they tried to bring Stoner back to consciousness, first removing his stiffly frozen capote and other articles of clothing and wrapping him in a bearskin. Royal Grening stood in the shadow as Captain Stoner groped back to life. 'Who are you?' he asked the owner of the ill-fated 'Dart.'

"'Captain William Van Ness, late of the exploring steamer 'Dart' and these are my crew or what are left of it.'

"'The 'Dart' did you say?' Captain Stoner's brow was furrowed as he looked around, as if expecting to see a remembered face. 'Wasn't there a young fellow by the name of Stoner—Harry Stoner, aboard? Was he lost?'

"'No, he was among those saved. But he has gone off on an expedition by dog-team in search of a guide, with one of my officers and a young man we found living here. They haven't returned and we are somewhat worried, though they may be all right.'

"'How old is this young man?'

"'About seventeen, I believe. Here is his —'



"What's his name?" interrupted Captain Stoner.

"Rex Grening."

"Then he was found and lived to grow up! But Grening isn't his name, not really."

"As I was going to say," continued Van Ness, 'here is his father —'

"I," again sharply interrupted Stoner, 'am his father!' Then shut his lips, staring fixedly at the tall, robust man with long white hair and beard who moved into the lamplight.

"True, David Stoner," uttered Grening hoarsely, 'you ARE his father, because of your treachery and lies to the woman we both loved and you married! But for you that boy's name would be Rex Grening as I have called him from the time I rescued him from, an ice floe.'

"Royal Grening, returned to life!" Stoner's expression was haggard, his eyes protruding, jaws agape.

"David Stoner, come to taunt me with your perfidy! Better had you sought your grave in icy waters a while ago than meet me!" Grening's face was livid with an expression of unutterable hate.

"Take him away, he will kill me!" screamed Stoner, and then, frothing at the mouth, he fell back upon the bed unconscious.

"But Royal Grening, if he ever intended to wipe out his score against Captain Stoner by killing him—which is doubtful—was saved from staining his hands with blood, for his enemy, as a result of his icy bath and exposure to freezing wind, developed pneumonia. Stoner died aboard his whaler before reaching port 'down below.' Captain Van Ness and his crew had taken the boat 'Billow' in charge, welcoming this wholly unforeseen opportunity to sail southward.

"Of course, no Eskimo guide was needed and the three boys returned safely to the Grening shelter the morning after the 'Billow' incident. Rex learned then who his real father was, but the latter, in the delirium of high fever at the rapid onset of pneumonia, never recovered enough to know what his long lost son looked like. It didn't take much persuasion on

the part of the reunited brothers, Harry and Rex, to induce Royal Grening to return with them to civilization. Death claimed Captain Stoner quickly and he was buried at sea.

"Standing on the deck of the whaler as she neared port, it was noticeable to all who stood close by, especially Harry and Rex and Captain Van Ness, that the late recluse's expression of ineffable sadness had changed markedly. Royal Grening had the appearance of a man looking forward to being reunited with someone he had never ceased loving during the dreary years of isolation in the frozen north, the woman whose two sons were hoping that the simultaneous return of a long lost infant and a sweetheart of her youth would not prove too great a shock. Warm-hearted Captain Van Ness, though he didn't know the lady, assured them he was confident it would not—and he was quite right."

The End

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Mr. Edwin Sommers of Prattsville, New York, sends in a clipping from the National Observer which in its obituary of J. C. Penney, mentioned that he was a winner of the Horatio Alger Award.

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## "THE WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF CAPT WILEY"

Edited by Burt L. Standish—  
Gilbert Patten

By Gerald J. McIntosh

Capt. Wiley was a well known character in the Merriwell stories in Tip Top Weekly. He was not popular with some readers but I always liked him a lot.

Making his entrance in No. 383 of Tip, Top, he bowed out in No. 560. His death was recorded in a footnote in No. 584. This was in 1907.

Burt L. Standish kept getting inquiries about the Captain till long after his death, urging that he be brought back. This of course, Standish couldn't comply with, so he wrote a letter to the readers, saying he had "run across the Captain's 'memoirs' and announced they would be published, which was done.

Top Notch Magazine ran them as a serial in 1911. Then, later, in 1914, they were also run serially in New Tip Top Weekly Nos. 77, 78, 79, 80 and 81.

By this time the Merriwells were on the wane and his "memoirs" didn't invoke much comment.

The memoirs of Cap't Wiley were on a par with his tall tales of his life in Tip Top which were gross representations of the adventurous life he had lived, or I should say, gross misrepresentations of such.

But I always admired him for his bluntness and his sharpness. He was one who could put Baron Munchausen in the shade. Never another exactly like him.

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